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Support for Border Management Task Force

Final Interim Report
August 2005

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Abstract

Jordan is a country that has a land border with Israel, Palestine, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia, two international airports (Amman and Aqaba) and a major seaport on the Red Sea at Aqaba. There are more than twenty-five different departments or agencies with direct interest in people and cargo crossing these international borders. Many of the departments and agencies are co-located at processing centers with much of the work performed being duplicated; in some cases, the information being collected by individual agencies is not shared with other agencies.

Since the September 11 terrorist attack many countries have reviewed their intelligence sharing, operational readiness and response arrangements in an effort to provide the best model to combat transnational organized crime and international terrorism. Jordan has taken the initiative and established a multi-agency task force to review and develop a national approach to border processing.

The task force approach has proven to be an excellent initiative in other customs administrations as it forges a commitment to develop a more efficient, effective and responsive representation by all agencies operating at the border. This report provides an overview of a consultancy that was undertaken to assist the Border Management Task Force in meeting the mandate of holistic border operations in Jordan. It also presents recommendations on how to improve task force operations to effectively carry out their mandate.

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Executive Summary and Recommendations

The creation of a border management task force with such a broad charter is a golden opportunity for border agencies in Jordan to develop a new operating environment more attuned to improving the balance between international trade facilitation initiatives and border control than without the establishment of this group.

There is no shortage of reports written by customs and security experts working with the USAID-funded AMIR program and the Jordan Customs Department on this subject. The authors of each of these reports have recommended a wide range of major changes to border processing arrangements in Jordan. The difference between these recommendations and those that will flow from the Border Management Task Force's (BMTF) final report is that the key Jordanian border agencies will formulate the latter by consensus and that consultants have formulated the former.

In the short term, (current to end of 2005) it is recommended that the BMTF:

- continue to brief the AMIR Program's in-house customs staff weekly on deliberations of the task force to ensure recommendations are consistent with international obligations and to have an independent third party provide advice and comment on work in progress.

In the long term, (January 2006 to May 2006) the BMTF's final report might consider inclusion of the following recommendations:

- a detailed proposal on whether to establish a single border agency, nomination of a lead agency with other agencies acting in a secondary capacity or a variation that may be better suited Jordan.
- a strategy to develop a single window border alert system, hosted by one agency and for use by all agencies with an interest in people and goods crossing the border.
- proposals to rationalize current duplicate systems at the border prior to developing and implementing a new processing regime.

These long-term recommendations may be expanded as the Task Force undertakes more work.

1. Background and Objectives of Consultancy

The Jordan Customs Department (JCD) has made significant progress on reforms over the life of the USAID-funded AMIR Program. A key concept that is now embedded into the thinking of JCD upper management is the need for closer coordination with other Jordanian agencies having a border mandate. To support the concept, the JCD Director General agreed to re-allocate a number of resources from the AMIR Program as well as the JCD to support a multi-agency Border Management Task Force (BMTF).

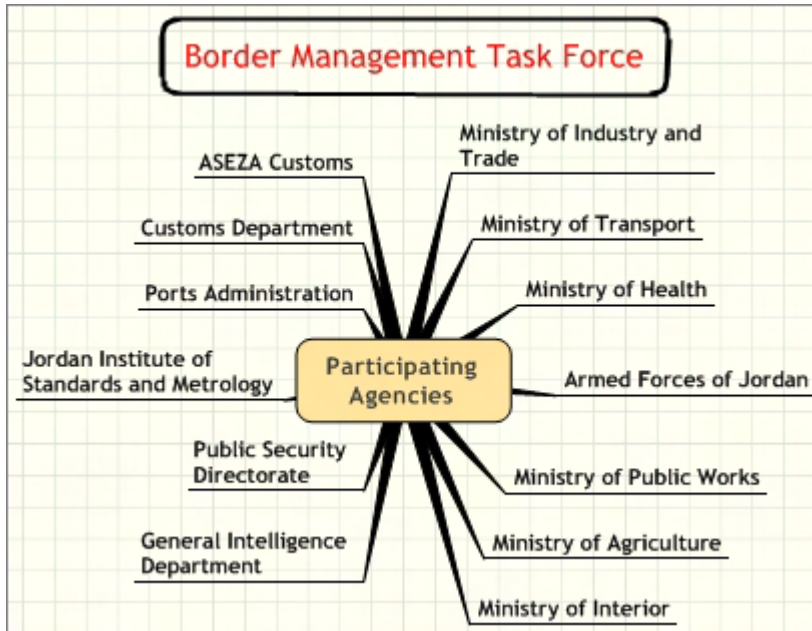
The Cabinet of Ministers approved the BMTF and 12 agencies in Jordan seconded employees to work in the team. The Prime Minister gave the BMTF a one-year mandate to identify ways to coordinate the needs of the separate agencies while keeping in mind the needs of the private sector to facilitate trade and the crossing of Jordan's borders by legitimate travelers.

The Task Force came together in March 2005 and since that time has visited a number of border processing centers and commenced the process of identifying new and innovative ways of aligning the various roles and responsibilities of the departments and agencies.

The objective of this consultancy was to assist the Border Management Task Force in meeting the mandate of holistic border operations in Jordan. Under this scope of work, the consultant worked with the BMTF on a daily basis to provide technical advice on proposed changes to Jordan's approach to border management.

After his departure from Amman, the consultant continued to remotely provide ongoing advice to the BMTF on all recommendations. This monitoring and mentoring will ensure compliance with international best practice as defined by the World Customs Organization (WCO) revised Kyoto Convention, WCO Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade, and other relevant conventions applicable at international borders.

2. Border Management Task Force: Participating Agencies



3. Steering Committee: August Meeting

On 4 August 2005 the JCD Director General (DG) H.E. Ala'a Bataineh chaired a meeting of senior officials from the various agencies represented on the Border Management Task Force. The DG stated that he wanted the BMTF to brief him every three to four weeks. It was agreed by a number of the committee members that the BMTF needed to take a more strategic view than in the past of future border operations and not become too involved in day to day inter-agency arrangements. The BMTF had been examining infrastructure issues and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) Commissioner said that the task force had to look beyond these matters to strategic issues. He went on to say that they needed to sort out the big issues first --in other words, to identify and act upon opportunities that already exist to improve coordination of the government's national objectives at the border.

The DG Customs with support from the ASEZA Commissioner of Customs stated that customs and security arrangements must be the same across Jordan. They also suggested, following a recent experience at Queen Alia International Airport by a senior Minister (who noted that 15 departments operate at the airport with no one agency representative designated at the principal point of contact), that one person should be made responsible for all matters of national interest at Jordan's border crossings.

The DG referred to Australia, New Zealand and the United States and said that the BMTF should consider these countries as workable models for coordinated border management and that it should also examine these and other models to develop their recommendations.

4. Workshops: Content

In addition to personal engagement on a daily basis, the consultant convened a number of workshops to identify issues related to border management.

In exploring the “big issues” for Jordan the team members settled on eighteen (18) key subjects that should be considered when developing a border processing model. They were:

- Terrorism
- Illegal immigration
- Customs fraud
- Intellectual property
- Transit
- Illegal imports/exports
- Public health issues
- Transport safety
- Public security
- Improved trade facilitation
- Technology
- Maintaining a stable political and social environment
- Improving international gateway clearance
- Corruption/Integrity
- Ensure correct revenue collected
- Tourism
- Trans National Organized Crime
- Regional security

In an effort to provide structure and purpose to the work of the Task Force, the members met a number of times to identify projects and tasks to be undertaken during the life of the Task Force. The consultant acted as a facilitator and assisted with developing framework for the report. Some of the issues considered were:

- . BMTF origin
- . BMTF participant agencies
- . Jordan’s national priorities
- . Individual agency mission statement/vision/goals
- . Individual agency – border tasks
- . Activities matrix
- . Analysis – common ground
- . Identify duplication
- . International/regional/national initiatives that impact on Jordan
- . Free trade agreements
- . CTPAT
- . IMO

- . WCO - Data sets
- . WCO Supply Chain in Security Framework
- . United Nations
- . Non-intrusive examination technology
- . Border processing technology
- . Bottlenecks
- . Process mapping/re-engineering
- . Standardization of documentation/instructions
- . Solutions
- . Single border agency
- . Integrated border management approach
- . Single window approach to government
- . Memoranda of understanding and service level agreements
- . Technology and applications

5. Ongoing Support: Documentation

The Border Management Task Force general supervisor has assumed responsibility for preparing a weekly report for submission to the consultant. A copy of the agreed Briefing Note is at *Annex 1*.

The project manager has requested a “Issues and Resolution Log” to monitor the requests and advice exchanged between the consultant and the BMTF. A copy of the proposed log is at *Annex 2*.

Annex 1 – Briefing Format



BRIEFING NOTE

1. Overview of Work Completed W/E/...../.....

Work Undertaken	Issues Raised	Proposed Action

Annex 2 – Issues and Resolution Log



ISSUES AND RESOLUTION LOG

Date Rec'd	DocRef #	Issue	Response	Date Sent	Recommendation